APRIL 1958

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT AND OPINION

The Social Face of the Church
Donald H. Bouma

The Challenge of the Post-Christian Age
Hugh A. Koops

John Gelock
Jacob G. Vanden Bosch

Book Review and Letters

PATHWAY BOOKS
for Knowledgeable Christians

STUDIES

G. C. Berkouwer
Recent Developments in Roman Catholic Thought (*Ready in May*)

L. D. Twilley
The Origin and Transmission of the New Testament (*Ready in April*)

Barton Babbage
Man in Nature and in Grace

G. W. Bromiley
Sacramental Teaching and Practice in the Reformation Churches

Lester DeKoster
All Ye That Labor (Christianity and Communism)

E. M. Blaiklock
Out of the Earth (Archaeology and the New Testament)

J. A. Thompson
Archaeology and the Old Testament

Carl F. H. Henry
Evangelical Responsibility in Contemporary Theology

Bernard Ramm
The Pattern of Authority

H. N. Ridderbos
When the Time Had Fully Come

Edward J. Young
Who Wrote Isaiah?

N. H. Ridderbos
Is There a Conflict Between Genesis I and Natural Science?

Pathway Books are all new and original monographs.

AT YOUR BOOKSTORE $1.50 EACH

WM. B. EERDMANS publishing co.
Grand Rapids 3
Michigan

The Reformed Journal

A PERIODICAL OF REFORMED COMMENT & OPINION

Volume VIII No.

APRIL 1958

Editorial Board
HENRY STOB, HARRY R. BOER, JAMES DAANE
LESTER DEKOSTER, GEORGE STOB

Publisher
William B. Eerdmans, Sr.

THE SOCIAL FACE OF THE CHURCH
Dr. Donald H. Bouma, *Professor of Sociology, Calvin College*

THE CHALLENGE OF THE POST-CHRISTIAN AGE 1
Rev. Hugh Koops, *Home Missionary, Christian Reformed Church, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, area*

JOHN GELOCK 1
Prof. J. G. Vanden Bosch, *Professor Emeritus, English Language and Literature, Calvin College*

BOOK REVIEW 2

LETTERS 2

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, excepting August, by the Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, at 231 Jefferson Avenue, S.E.,, Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. Entered as second-class matter at the Post Office at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 25c per copy; $2.50 one year; $4.00 two years

ADDRESS all subscriptions to Subscription Department, *The Reformed Journal*, 231 Jefferson Avenue, S. E., Grand Rapids 3, Michigan. Address all editorial and advertising communications to Managing Editor and Advertising Manager respectively.

Managing Editor: Calvin P. Bulthuis; Advertising Manager: David Wynbeek

The Social Face of the CHURCH

by Donald H. Bouma

THERE ARE MANY WAYS of looking at a church.* One may look at its theology and the systematization of its beliefs. One may look at its ritual and its modes of expressing its beliefs. Its moral and ethical system; its history and development; its program for handing down to the coming generations the principles held by the present generation; its mission of witnessing to others; its internal socio-cultural composition — all of these, and others, are ways of looking at a church.

A church has many faces. Like the varying reports of the different men inspecting the elephant, the way a church looks depends on what one is looking at, and from what perspective or vantage point he views it.

Whether one looks at a church from the inside or from the outside also makes a difference. The insider has the advantage of more adequate familiarity and understanding, but the disadvantage of sometime failing to note the significance of things just because of his familiarity. It is like traveling the same road to work every day and becoming insensitive to the scenery. At times people from Grand Rapids tell Chicagoans about the Stock Yards; and Chicagoans tell people from Grand Rapids about the Furniture Museum. On the other hand, the outsider has the advantage of objectivity and a fresh, alert approach but he must struggle with a deficiency in background understanding.

The observance of the centennial of the Christian Reformed Church has been the occasion for a large number of people to take a look at the various faces of the church. Some have looked forward; many have looked back on history; others have assessed our present position. Some have "viewed with alarm"; others have "pointed with pride." Almost all of those who have recorded their observations have been insiders. This is regrettable, I think. It is always interesting, though often traumatic, to see ourselves as others do.

I have undertaken to write about the socio-cultural dimension of our church, about our life-ways as a middle-class people of Dutch descent in mid-twentieth century America. I do so with mixed feelings. Since the social face of the church is both interesting and important, holding up a mirror to better see that face could be an exciting experience. On the other hand, there are so many difficulties in such an undertaking that one is fearful to proceed. There is, for one thing, the difficulty of achieving the objectivity to which the sociologist aspires. When one has been intimately involved in a social system for all of his life it is not easy to stand back and scrutinize with even a moderate amount of detachment.

Then there is the possibility of calling attention to features of the denominational face which are not flattering, and of incurring the disfavor of those who prefer to blame the one who talks about the undesirable situation than to become concerned about the revealed condition. Further, one is hesitant because there are so many aspects of the socio-cultural structure of our existence that all cannot be handled in the framework of this report. Selection must be made and some would select differently than I have. There will be those who maintain that the mirror is being held at a slant, or that there is something wrong with the mirror. Besides, we are looking not only at static structure but at dynamic process. The fact that we pause to take a look at this centennial point does not mean that things have jelled. Rather, there is constant change, and the study of change is a touchy affair.

In a venture such as this it is difficult to present material in such a way that the reader can clearly distinguish between analysis and evaluation, between the presentation of things as they are and the judgment of things in terms of one's values. For example, one may find that the Christian Reformed Church has not adjusted itself to the general American way of things as rapidly as have other denominations. But whether one judges this to be good or bad depends on his point of view. When evaluations are attempted in this report they will be clearly indicated. The rest of the report is description and analysis. Assessment is the prerogative of the reader.

Another difficulty we face is the absence of empirical data. Few objective studies have been made of our group. One does not adequately study the

* The research work back of the empirical evidence cited in this report was done by the following people who are or were sociology students at Calvin College: Gertrude Camps, Theresa Willems, James Kok, John De Haan, Edward VanderVeen, Edward Smith, and Gordon Negen.

socio-cultural aspects of a group while cloistered in the ivory tower. One cannot be content to sit back and speculate. No one person in the church has the knowledge and experience to describe accurately the sociology of so large and diverse a group. To meet the problem at least partially certain limited empirical studies will be reported. That this is still inadequate, I admit. This is why the job is tackled with mixed feelings.

OUTSIDERS often remark that the Christian Reformed Dutch represent one of the largest unassimilated groups in American society. Established in 1857 by Dutch immigrants, the church has grown almost entirely by additions of the same stock. A high birth rate and an enviable record of holding its young people, along with strong sanctions toward in-group marriage, have been the prime reasons for growth. Adults added to the church have been largely new contingents of Dutch migrants. While other nationalist groups have become diluted and almost lost in the Americanization process, we remain an identifiable entity. Although we are found coast to coast and from Vancouver to Miami, it is almost always in clusters that we are found. Clannishness is the word outsiders use to speak of us. Our "we-group" referent is small and uninclusive. Others hear us speak of "we" and "our," of "our circles" and "our kind." We are fond of drawing lines of demarcation; all of us on one side of the line, and the rest of the world on the other.

The extreme geographical mobility of American society has made little impact on us. It isn't that we are not mobile while other Americans are, but that our moving is largely from one Dutch cluster to another. Although 25 percent of the Calvin Alumni mailing list must be revised each year because of new addresses, still over 50 percent of our people live in some ten counties. We like it this way and sanctions are imposed when a member accepts a position in a community where there is no Christian Reformed cluster to which he can attach himself.

Two other trends have had much less impact on our church than they have had on other denominations. Studies have shown that the more education members have, the greater the tendency to leave the church. In one denomination, of those who left 72 percent joined another, but more liberal, church. Also, studies have shown that the higher the income, the greater the tendency to leave the church. Although a careful study has not been made of the kinds of people who leave our church, and a significant number does leave each year, nevertheless observation does not substantiate the fact that increased education or increased wealth operate as threats to continued membership in the church.

We do present a face of homogeneity to tho around us. There is a uniformity not only in o theology, but also in our values and mores a styles of living. Simply knowing that a person Christian Reformed, an observer could make ce tain predictions about his Saturday night behavi what he will do on Sunday, and where one cou find him at 10 o'clock Thanksgiving morning.

But to focus only on this maintainance of di tinctiveness and perpetuation of group identi would be to overlook the process of assimilatio which is taking place. Both tendencies are four both within our group and outside of it. Some em phasize the importance of assimilation, others th need for perpetuation of group identity. It is i teresting to note the change in the general Amer can view of this struggle.

The earlier notion of the country as a meltin pot in which all differences were to be boiled dow into an undifferentiated uniformity has been di carded and in this process the very meaning o Americanism has been redefined. Whereas pr viously the perpetuation of group identity wa viewed as an obstacle to the Americanization pro ess, there is a growing opinion that the retentio of group loyalties is entirely consonant with th American pattern, neither impeding integratio nor endangering national unity. There is toda respect for the idea of America as a mosaic o variations, respect for the whole spectrum of di ferences that third-generation Americans presen

The desired end is no longer considered to be th reduction of intergroup differences, but rather th reduction of intergroup tensions through, amon other things, the development of greater under standing of and appreciation for the manifest dif ferences. Ethnicity is not so much the threat in pluralistic society such as ours. The difficulty i ethnocentrism — viewing other styles of life a inferior to one's own.

The integration of our people into the genera American community has progressed through one hundred years and at an accelerating rate. Bu with us, as with some other religio-ethnic groups the feeling runs strong for the retention of ou identity and the affirmation of our spiritual an cultural values, both for our own sake and for th sake of the nation.

We know that groups with older membership tend to be more insulated, tend to revel in the status quo or to look backward with yearning glances. Our church actively involves large num bers of young people and young adults. We are a 100-year-old church with a youthful face. Youth gul groups look ahead and what they see is ever increasing involvement in their community situa tions. They realize that no man is an island and that no group can be either. This suggests the pos sibilities for tension between the "older" and

nger" groups. But this is no new problem a common rootage in theological beliefs affords potential for resolution of the tension.

Ve know, too, that groups in rural areas tend e more self-contained than their urban counter-ts. Our church was rural in its origin and still ay bears more of a rural stamp than almost other denomination of comparable size. A dy conducted by the Calvin Sociology Depart-nt of the Calvin Seminary graduates who en-ed the ministry in the decade 1941-1950 revealed t 28 percent of them were sons of farmers and t 77 percent of them served their first charge a rural area. However, the urban drift in this ntry is pronounced and the extensive growth the Canadian section of our church is primarily an.

The complexity and mobility of urban life will ce us to face up to the real problems of adapta-n to changed and ever-changing social situa-ns. Other denominations have badly stumbled just this point in their history. Undoubtedly s is one of the big challenges facing our church its second century. Maintaining orthodoxy in age of tomorrow calls for relevant teaching l preaching. The timeless teachings of God's rd must be brought to bear on constantly emerg-problems of the market place. This is a tough, cessary, and exhilarating challenge.

We must chart a course between the extremes self-segregation on the one hand and complete similation, or loss of identity, on the other. Some y that both extremes stem from the same basic use — a fear of difference. I feel that this fear less pronounced among us today than it was enty years ago.

We know that when escape from one's own group easy and perhaps even profitable, group identifi-tion must have something positive and advanta-ous to offer. For some groups in our society this s resulted in a redefinition of the role, and for any the redefinition has resulted only in further sses. For some of our own church-oriented or-nizations and institutions there may be need for le-redefinition. This has been true of burial and lf-help societies and may be true today of our en's societies, for example. More important than definition of function, however, is a renewed ef-rt to make the basics of our beliefs applicable changing conditions. This calls for an enlight-ed leadership, alert to the changing scene around and the changing nature of the problems we ce. Good answers to old problems will not suf-e.

ALTHOUGH the Christian Reformed Church is uniquely homogeneous, one runs risks in at-mpting to make generalizations about it. There a heterogeneity, too. Almost all of us are of Dutch ancestry, but some of us operate business establishments in the New York metropolitan area while others grow corn in Iowa. There is a strong uniformity in the preaching and teaching of doctrinal beliefs agreed upon, but some of us have very little formal education while others have university degrees. While, as a group, we are middle class, the yearly income of some is twenty-five times that of others. Some of us live in elaborated Dutch ghettos in Grand Rapids, Chicago, Bellflower, or Prospect Park, whether they be rural or urban. Others live as small groups in Cincinnati, Philadelphia, Detroit or Portland, Mich.

How does one make socio-cultural generalizations about such a diverse group? How can one avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentrism? Grand Rapids is not the Christian Reformed Church; one must take care that he does not view the divergencies of the whole through the provincial spectacles of any particular local area.

To avoid these errors, to broaden our perspective, to feel the pulse of all sections of the church, a study was designed whereby a sample of freshman students at Calvin College was asked a number of questions about the church and our people in their home communities. They would be less influenced by Grand Rapids than would be upperclassmen. It should not be assumed that this freshman group is typical of all the people in the home community, nor that it is typical of Calvin students in general. An obviously better, but impossible procedure would have been to do a study of a variety of people in a variety of communities.

About half (47 percent) of the students said that people of Reformed persuasion were in the majority in their communities (44 percent said minority and 9 percent said it was about equal). This suggests something about the clustering of our people and the potential for witnessing and influence. Just half of the group felt that Christian Reformed people were actively involved in the general business and political life of the community.

The group was asked how "non-Reformed people react when you tell them you are Christian Reformed." The reaction was a puzzled one, said 23 percent; "they don't know what Christian Reformed is"; 5 per cent said "they seem disturbed"; 4 percent said they seem pleased; 6 percent never had the experience and 61 percent said the reaction varies with the situation.

Our church has been known for its high percentage of in-group marriages in spite of its increasing involvement in the American scene. The group was asked to what extent young people in their home church married outside the denomination. Results: 25 percent said often or quite often; 34 percent said now and then; 36 percent said rarely and 44 percent said never. As has been

found in other studies of inter-religious marriage, the practice increases as the concentration of like people in a community decreases. Such intermarriages, of course, may result in gaining or losing a church member. Of the respondents 30 percent said the couples joined the Christian Reformed church, 8 percent said the couples joined the other denomination, and 48 percent said it was about half and half.

About 60 percent of the group felt that our church was not effectively reaching and meeting the needs of teen-agers. Historically, the church has had an extensive program for involving the new generation in church-oriented activities, but the dissatisfaction is apparent. When asked for suggestions of improvement about 50 percent recommended more social activities for young people; 11 percent said more interest in youth by ministers and others, and 5 percent called for more practical preaching. One out of three had no suggestion to offer.

The group was asked what it considered to be the great strength of the Christian Reformed Church. "Sound doctrine founded on the Bible and the creeds," reported 44 percent. Attendance at both services and unity were the next most frequently mentioned strengths, with 10 percent each, followed by Christian schools and catechism. Over 20 percent could mention none.

The most serious threat to the Christian Reformed Church was considered by 23 percent of the respondents to be "liberalism, modernism, apostasy and materialism." Laxity in amusements and principles and a lack of enthusiasm for witnessing were each mentioned by about 10 percent, followed by a lack of practical application of Christianity to life. About 20 percent could think of no serious threat.

A somewhat similar question asked whether there were any dangerous trends in the church. Over 60 percent said yes, 16 percent said no, and 22 percent said they didn't know. There was no clear indication, however, as to what these dangerous trends were. Most frequently mentioned (by 15 percent) was "liberalism and modernism," followed by "self-satisfaction and complacency" (6 percent). This would seem to indicate a kind of free-floating anxiety about the church being in danger from certain internal trends with little consensus as to the nature or direction of the trends. At this point one can choose from a number of hypotheses to frame an explanation for this anxiety complex. It is significant that at the moment it is not attached to any specific event or situation in the church. However, it is the nature of free-floating fears and anxieties that they can, at any moment, become attached to a specific situation.

There was considerable satisfaction with the way practical problems of the Christian life were discussed in sermons. Some 44 percent said occurred frequently, 49 percent sometimes and 5 percent said practically never.

The role to be played in our church by the Dutch immigrants in Canada is often discus Their increasing numbers and growing repre tation at synod is viewed with alarm by some, anticipation by others. Of the student group s ied 27 percent thought the Dutch immigrants w be a wholesome influence on the church; 20 per thought they would be a problem group that w cause trouble; 34 percent thought they would "just like the rest of us in a few years," and percent had no opinion. Of the sample, 2 per were such new immigrants.

In an attempt to determine to which other nomination the group felt most close, the ques was asked: "If through force of circumstances found it necessary to join another denominat which would be your first choice?" Over 60 perc chose the Reformed church while 26 percent nar an "orthodox Presbyterian church." "Ortho Baptist," Protestant Reformed, Lutheran Evangelical United Brethren followed in that der.

The hostile feelings that exist in our chu toward Catholics is a matter of comment by b those within the church and those outside. though this feeling of social distance is difficult measure it was felt that some attempt should made. As our people relate themselves to the vironing community, increased contacts and co munications with Catholics is an inevitabili There have been and will be issues on which t two groups stand together over against forces atheism. The points of difference are stress enough to need no mention here. The studer were asked two questions: how their parents f toward Catholics and how they themselves feel. the group, 50 percent said that their parents h strong feelings against Catholics; 30 percent sa the parents had mild feelings against them; 7 pe cent said their parents had no feelings one way the other; 10 percent said the parents felt "qui congenial" toward them; and 2 percent said th felt "very close" to them.

The feelings of the students themselves we less hostile. Only 30 percent had strong feelin against, another 38 percent had mild feelin against, 6 percent had no feelings about Catholi 15 percent felt congenial, and 2 percent very clo to them. One may be tempted to conclude fr this that our young people are more tolerant Catholics than their parents are, or that there a trend toward greater tolerance in our churc It should be noted, however, that most studies this type which ask the same group to state the own feelings as well as the way they "think" othe feel, show a greater tolerance among the respo

it than among the group the respondent is re-
ing for.

One might wish that our young people were be-
taught more intelligently to assess Catholicism,
l other denominations, too, for that matter. Too
quently they develop from home, school and
urch a conditioned reflex so that to mention the
rd *Catholic* is to conjure up in the mind a nega-
e stereotype. It has become a term of ap-
obrium. Assessment may not have been so
portant in our rural past. In our urban future
is critically necessary.

NEGRO-WHITE relationships constitute an area of considerable concern in our society. The urch in America has often been criticized for gging behind other institutions and agencies in e fight of the Negro-American for the rights of st-class citizenship. Eleven o'clock Sunday orning is often called "the most segregated hour American life." What face do we present on is controversial and complex issue?

The problem has interesting facets to it. There hardly a social problem on which Scripture eaks more clearly and unambiguously than this e. The middle class in American society exhibits ward Negroes considerable prejudice and antag-ism in its feelings, and discrimination in its be-vior. We go to Scripture for guidance on life's sues; at least we maintain that we do. Yet, we e middle class. Scripture tells us one thing; our cio-cultural relationships tell us the opposite. ow do we come out?

Just as there are contradictions in the voices to hich we listen, so there are inconsistencies in the ce we present to our social world. The picture is urred. We do mission work among the Negroes Nigeria, and also among the Negroes of Har-m. More significantly, we do mission work among egroes in our own backyards — in Grand Rap-ls, Passaic, N. J., and even in Terra Ceia, N. C. Ve have an ordained Negro minister — quite omething for a group which has very few non-utch ministers to begin with. This is part of the ace we present.

But, then, there is the other part. We are the nly church of any size which does not have a de-ominational stand on this social problem about hich Scripture speaks so clearly. Different people ive different reasons why this is so, just as sev-ral reasons were stated at the Synod last June for ot giving synodical approval to the race resolutions resented by Classis Hackensack. One surely can-ot reason that the absence of a church stand re-eals the intensity of antagonism toward Negroes. should also be noted that the Synod did vote to efer the Hackensack resolutions to the churches or their guidance. But whether one likes it this ay or prefers another way, the fact remains that when outsiders look closely at our face they see that we have no official denominational stand on the race problem. Some will say that this is a technicality and, really, if this were all to give us concern we would be in an enviable position. There are other denominations which have beautifully stated official positions on this problem, but whose practices are a far cry from the assertions of their statements.

But there are other things. About 60 percent of the sophomore students at Calvin College believe that the plight of Negroes can be partially understood in terms of the so-called "Curse of Ham." This unbiblical myth is spread by certain "story bibles" and by certain "Bible workbooks," both widely used in our Christian schools. (It should be observed that the errors have been revised out of both of these sources in the last few years). This has provided a pseudo-religious basis for both prejudice and discrimination, and has prevented many from viewing the problem in the light of what Scripture actually says. There are, however, hopeful signs of change. I have mentioned the important revisions of the printed errors. Further, only 10 years ago over 80 percent of the Calvin students had this mistaken notion, now it is down to 60 percent. And our ministers are increasingly exposing this error.

Those who know us in our communities at times chide us because there is no important difference between us and the unchurched of the community in our feelings about Negroes. They suggest that we preach a good game, but the living of it is a different matter. And it is true that studies of the attitudes toward Negroes of our people and of others reveal no significant difference. It would seem at times that our ear is tuned more to the middle-class value system than to the demands of Scripture. After watching this problem closely for twelve years I am convinced that the Christian Reformed Church will come out on the right side of this question. And by right side I mean the Scriptural side. If we have fallen short in the past it has been because the clear light of Scripture has not been focused sharply enough on the concrete situation in which we earn our daily bread and live our lives. It has not penetrated the cultural screen of prejudice.

Two recent studies illuminate this problem. Both studies measured the reaction of our people to the possibility of Negroes becoming members of their congregations. The respondents could choose from five categories ranging from "accept enthusiastically," which had a score value of 1, to "greatly object," with a score value of 5. One study was done by a Calvin Seminary senior (now a minister) of one hundred Christian Reformed ministers in five sections of the denomination. The ministers were asked how they thought the ma-

jority of their congregation would react, and then how they themselves felt about it. The congregational score, country-wide, averaged out at 2.26. (A score of 1 was the lowest possible and 5 was the highest. The lower the score the greater the acceptance of Negro members.) The personal score of the ministers was 1.43.

The Calvin freshmen study cited earlier asked the same question. The students' conception of the feeling in their home church resulted in a score of 2.53, while their own feelings came out at 1.87. While 9 percent of the students thought their church would "accept enthusiastically," 33 percent of the students themselves would. Only 10 percent of the students said they would "prefer not to have Negroes come," but 34 percent said their church would have this feeling.

Although this is not the place for an intensive analysis of these findings, two things may be noted briefly. One, even the highest group score, 2.53, is on the positive side of the 5-point scale. Second, the ministerial group, which plays such a large part in guiding the lives of our people, reveals the most "accepting" attitude. This represents some empirical evidence for the personal expression of confidence, indicated earlier, that as a group we are headed in the right direction regarding this problem.

ONE LEARNS much about a denomination from a study of its church paper. The printed page is part of the face of the group. From it one learns the fears and hopes, the shifting areas of concern from time to time.

Our church is known as a group which takes its denominational paper seriously. The percentage of families subscribing to *The Banner* is high compared with other denominations. Circulation grows at a faster rate than does the number of families in the church. The position of editor is considered to be of crucial importance and full of prestige. In 1940, when the church had 26,000 families on its rolls, the *Banner* circulation was 18,000. Today, with a membership of 48,000 families, the circulation is 37,000. In 1940 there was a *Banner* subscription for every 1.44 families. Today the rate is one for every 1.30 families. While other denominations are concerned with declining interest in their publications, our support increases. Assimilation to the American social system, including its mass media barrage, has not dimmed the interest in our own affairs.

What would the outsider see if he were to look at our printed face? There are three departments of any church paper which give the inquisitive investigator the best quick look at a denomination. As a result of work done for a research seminar by several senior Sociology students we have some idea of the face we present, some idea of the th that have most caused us concern in recent yea

The editorials appearing in a church paper i cate those areas that are considered importan the editor and about which he feels the chu should be informed. To determine which to were deemed important enough for editorial c ment, a study was made of over 600 editorials wh appeared in *The Banner* for the twelve years fr 1944 through 1955. Roughly, this represents last half of the twenty-five-year tenure of E H. J. Kuiper as editor.

The 612 editorials in this period were classi under thirteen main headings. The largest num of editorials (91, or 15 percent of the total) cussed various social problems. In this group th were 14 on the subject of race and brotherho 13 on war, 9 on labor. Others were concerned w movies, mixed marriages, drinking, and divo In some years (1945 and 1952) there were as ma as 13 on social problems; in other years (19 and 1947) none or only one.

The second largest area of concern was theolo with 85 editorials, or 14 percent of the total. T other areas were: spiritual life, 75; education, synod, 71; yearly events, 67; Christian Reform Church, 49; missions, 44; special events, 24; stitutions and agencies, 13; personalities, 6; oth churches, 4; miscellaneous, 9.

There may be disagreement as to whether the were actually the areas of greatest concern duri this period. One's value system would determi his judgment. The point is that these were t topics on which the attention of a significant se ment of our church was focused in recent years.

The department containing letters to the edit indicate those things which have bothered a pa of the membership of a denomination. It is imm diately granted that those who write letters to paper may not represent a cross section of t group. For that matter, who is to determi whether those who write in other departments of church paper represent any cross section. Lette to the editor, however, do provide an insight in the things that irk or please people. And this important.

An analysis was made of letters appearing *The Banner* in the first two years of three decad to determine clustering and trends. The lette were classified under twelve headings. In th 1930's the area of greatest concern was churc policy, such as the use of individual communi cups, etc. Second was morals, including Sunda observance, liquor, divorce. Third was spiritu life, such as tithing, prayer, devotions. Fourth wa theology, including doctrines and interpretation Scripture.

In the 1940's the area of greatest concern wa war, followed by labor, spiritual life, and moral

the 1950's church policy again ranked first, fol-ed by missions, spiritual life, and morals.

Two trends of interest may be noted. While 27 rcent of the letters dealt with morals in the 30's, only 9 percent did in the 1940's and 10 rcent in the 1950's. Concern for others in-ased during this period. Only 8 percent of the ters concerned missions in the 1930's, but 18 rcent did in the 1950's. Although no letters dealt th the race problem in the 1930's or 1940's, 8 rcent of them did in the 1950's.

Another church paper department which af-rds a view of the group is the column which an-ers questions causing concern to the reader. A idy was made of this column in *The Banner* for x years, 1930, 1935, 1940, 1945, 1950, 1955. Only e kinds of questions asked were analyzed. The swers given by the various men who edited the lumn during this time span were disregarded r purposes of this study.

The questions were classified into nine cate-ries. The largest category, church order and doc-ine, included 28 percent of the questions. Scrip-ral questions constituted 22 percent of the total, llowed by worldly amusements, sacraments and eeds, Sunday observance, marriage and divorce, nristian schools, lodges, and miscellaneous.

Over the twenty-five-year span two trends ap-ared. The number of questions about worldly nusements dropped sharply from 1930 to 1945 d has remained at a comparatively low level nce then. Concern over Sunday observance was reater in 1955 than in any previous year. For e other categories there were variations within e decades, with no indications of trends.

OUR PEOPLE ahve throughout the years estab-ished a remarkable network of distinctive in-titutions to provide health and welfare services. he three mental hospitals at Goffle Hill, Denver, nd Cutlerville; Children's Retreat and Elim; Bethany Christian Home for the adoption and fos-er care of children; Christian Guidance Bureau or counseling in personal and family problems; omes for the aged and convalescent homes — ll of these are a witness of our concern for unique roblems of our people. Most of them are provided y and provided for our own group. Other re-gious and nationalist groups have done likewise.

In recent years there has been considerable ex-ension of governmental and community respon-ibility in these fields, along with a recognition hat the health and welfare of the individual, re-ardless of his nationality or religion, is a matter f concern to society as a whole. In the light of the hanging American scene, are these institutions to e viewed as healthy manifestations of pluralism, r as a threatening persistence of separatist ten-encies?

The present value of our programs cannot be measured by strictly functional criteria. Some of these programs might be carried out more efficiently by a non-religious agency or by the government. When religious principles are the basis for distinctive programs, however, the functional criteria are of no consequence. For this view there is increasing respect among our neighbors. A secondary consequence of such institutions and programs, even though not the intended consequence, is that they serve as important symbols of achievement, bolstering self-respect among members of the minority group and fostering in-group solidarity.

While we defend the value of these institutions for our own group and also for general American society, our group is often charged with caring for its own at the expense of a broader community concern. Although this is undoubtedly true of some of us, the generalization is not quite accurate and is each year less true. Taxes force us to contribute to the welfare of others, and Community Chests enable us to give more broadly. Our social work graduates have gone into a wide variety of community agencies and many of our leaders participate in the boards of such agencies. Increasingly we are mindful of the full implications of Paul's injunction to "do good unto all men, but especially to those of the household of faith."

THERE ARE many other features of the face of the Christian Reformed Church about which the outsider would comment. He would notice our strong family life. In a divorce-mad society we are known as a group of stable marriages. A divinely ordained institution, marriage is not to be entered hastily, nor forsaken except in extreme cases. He would also notice, however, an increasing number of our wives and mothers gainfully employed outside of the home.

The onlooker observes with fascination our system of educating the young, the triple approach of home, school, and church. The expanding network of Christian schools impresses him. At times he likes to blame failure of public school bond issues for improvements on the Christian school supporters, even though a careful study of this problem in Grand Rapids indicated there were other reasons.

He looks at our political behavior and is apt to say that we vote as a bloc and only for Hollanders when possible. Studies have shown, however, that nationalist, racial, or religious groups do not act as organized voting blocs, and we do not either. Bonds of culture and tradition and religious principles, however, may cause such groups to view current issues and candidates in very much the same way. If anyone thinks he can "deliver" or "capture" the Christian Reformed voters in Grand

Rapids, he is in for a rude shock, if not in this election then in the next one. With one exception, the Christian Reformed voter has displayed considerable independence. The exception is the marked orientation of our people in most sections of the country to the Republican party. There are undoubtedly many reasons for this, but at least a partial explanation lies in the rural background and the general middle-class placement of the group. All studies of voting behavior have shown that socio-economic status is the strongest of several determinants of party preference.

Throughout its history our church has drawn its leadership largely from the clergy. As our laity develops competence and prominence in a wide variety of fields, one can expect a much more diffused pattern of leadership in the days ahead. Whereas at one time the minister was considered an authority on all questions, both the ministers and the laymen recognize the limited area of competence of the clergy. Whether the minister maintains his position of honor and respect in our group, and to me this is of crucial importance, will depend to no little extent upon the proper limiting of his area of asserted competence. The minister is not an authority on science, on social problems, on child rearing, on agriculture, on mental or physical illness. He is an authority on what God's Word has to say about these various specialities.

We are experiencing this diffusion of leadership now and it will continue. That the process does not result in a diminution of respect for the clergy, as their leadership functions narrow, should be our concern. The specialization of leadership will result in variety of leaders in a variety of areas of activity. Mention may be made of one type of leader who tends to arise in a minority group in the process of assimilation and adjustment. This type of leader is one who has won acclaim in the outside world. The majority group, seeking to encourage participation of a minority group, will often invite as a representative of that group a person who possesses the attributes important in the larger community and who still retains at least some identification with the minority group. Such a person may be more a symbolic than an actual representative of his group. He may become more influential within his own group, since he brings outside approval and sanction. Or he may become less influential within his group because of fears, suspicions, and jealousies. Or he may serve as an effective mediator between the group and the larger society, a mediatorship increasingly important in an age of complexity and mobility which makes insularity impossible.

Another problem of social organization which will increasingly bother the church is that of multiple-group membership. The day when the member's life was organized around church-oriented activities is gone in most sections of our chu We still have a complex network of church ac ities which attempt to attract the member fi Monday to Saturday, but these activities do grow proportionately to membership growth the church and they face constant competition fr non-church interests. One might say that we ha in the competitive struggle, managed to prese Sunday but have lost the rest of the week. average person today has multiple-group memb ships. Simultaneously he belongs to professio community, aesthetic, recreational, and religi groups. This is a pronounced trend and could c stitute a serious threat. Some groups have gre er salience for the individual than others. Wh does the religious group fit in the hierarchy of individual's associations? Multiple-group ident cation may enrich or disturb, depending on compatibility of the various groups with which individual is associated.

The critical question is which of these grou constitutes his reference group. Sociologically, t reference group is the organization among t many involving the person to which he primar "refers" for his life cues. The potential dangers multiple-group membership can be minimized the church remains the reference group; if it r tains the position of primacy in the believer's life

Because of this, and for other reasons too, o church must increasingly address itself to t social organizational problems of the day. Life too complexly intertwined for us to be able mu longer to say, "This does not belong to the sphe of the church." We critically need diligent stud of what Scripture has to say about our life situa tion today. Fears of the "social gospel" must n dissuade us from this task, nor must out-mode conceptions of "sphere sovereignty." This is n at all to say that the church as institute must rus into a wide variety of activities, nor that we shoul have a rash of synodically dictated stands on ever aspect of life. God's Word is for all time and a places, and it is the difficult task of the preache to bring that Word to bear on the problems of t day. It is the duty of each believer to submit hi pattern of daily activities to the scrutiny of tha Word.

In a homogeneous group there is a similarity o mores. (By mores I mean standards of right an wrong which are not Scripturally dictated.) Ou growing heterogeneity, however, is resulting in divergence of mores. Historically, we have had tendency to identify mores with principles, and i our former situation of homogeneity this was prob ably not serious. Distinguishing between more and principles, and it is often difficult to do, is necessity in the days of heterogeneity ahead. T make a principle of the mores is on the one han to make God say something He does not say, an

the other to alienate fellow believers whose tem of mores is different.

Christ speaks of this problem in Matthew 15:6-9, here He says, "For the sake of your tradition, u have made void the word of God. You hypo-ites! . . . teaching as doctrines the precepts of en." The parallel danger must also be avoided, at of considering the teachings of Scripture as erely the mores.

WE ARE, then, a group with one eye cocked on assimilation, the other on the maintenance group identity. Increased contacts with out-ders will mean a more rapid rate of assimilation nd greater heterogeneity. It will also mean that ose around us will know us better and have eater understanding of us. The term "Christian eformed" will not sound so strange to them. And nstead of stereotypes of us such as "fatalists" and "pessimists" and "that's the group that doesn't believe in movies," will come more complete understanding. They will see the basic core of us.

No ethnic or religious group is a monolithic entity. Jews are not a tightly knit group, despite widespread belief to the contrary. The Catholic group, as Catholics themselves admit, is split along national, social, economic, and political lines. Heterogeneity, except for the nationalist, characterizes our group. Strange as it may seem, this heterogeneity is accentuated by the recent migrations from the Netherlands. But heterogeneity does not presage group disintegration. Studies of other minority groups have shown that the strongest binding factor is religious identification. A set of common religious convictions has always been the most significant binding force in our group, and it is on this base that continued group solidarity rests.

The Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ

EXCERPTS FROM TWO SERMONS BY JOHN CALVIN

"If you wish to approach Jesus Christ, you must leave our earthly members" (Colossians 3:5). What? Must e leave our feet and our hands? Not at all, but our ornications, gluttonies, envies, malice, and all other ollutions. Do we wish, then, to seek Jesus Christ on igh? We must be rid of all these earthly members. or what relation would there be between us and Jesus hrist? We must not mix Him at all with our pollu-ions, but we must come to Him in order that He may withdraw us from them. That, then, is how we must not only know that He is in heaven, but also we must leave our earthly members, which separate us from Him, nd we must be raised on high. How? In true chastity, n sobriety, in true charity, in temperance, in diligence, n patience, in every other virtue. These are the wings to raise us to heaven, although properly speaking we need not have wings to fly there, or ladders to climb there, but that Jesus Christ leads us there and raises us by the graces which He distributes, as those which I have named. This is how we must apply this doctrine to the Supper, so that, when the bread and wine are presented to us, we must learn to seek all good in Jesus Christ, that we may be united together, and that each one must lay aside his own affections. If I feel myself to be distracted from Jesus Christ by any means, I must tear all that away from me, so that I may be truly raised to Jesus Christ — not that we can be raised to Him in perfection, but we must try to come closer and closer to Him. In fact, the Supper is given to us to this end; and we receive it not only once in our lives, but often, to signify to us that we must walk in this world until He has withdrawn us to Himself and delivered us from this body.

* * *

. . . This kingship of Jesus Christ is for us, for there was no need to make it for Him, since He is eternal with the Father. But what follows? He is at the right hand of God in this nature which He assumed with us. This is so that we may be assured that, since we are in His protection, no evil can happen to us. True it is that He will permit us to be hampered by our flesh and to be surrounded with many miseries. But what of it? He is always ready to stretch out to us His hand, and we must be certain that, although we suffer for a time, the end of it will be for our salvation. That is what must be understood when His Ascension is spoken of. Thus, since He has gone up there, and is in heaven for us, let us note that we need not fear to be in this world. It is true that we are subject to so much misery that our condition is pitiable, but at that we need neither be astonished nor confine our attention to ourselves. Thus, we look to our Head Who is already in heaven, and say, "Although I am weak, there is Jesus Christ Who is powerful enough to make me stand upright. Although I am feeble, there is Jesus Christ Who is my strength. Although I am full of all miseries, Jesus Christ is in immortal glory and what He has will some time be given to me and I shall partake of all His benefits. Yes, the devil is called the prince of this world. But what of it? Jesus Christ holds him in check, for He is King of heaven and earth. There are devils above us in the air who make war against us. But what of it? Jesus Christ rules above, having entire control of the battle. Thus, we need not doubt that He gives us the victory. I am here subject to many changes, which may cause me to lose courage. But what of it? The Son of God is my Head, Who is exempt from all change. I must, then, take confidence in Him. This is how we must look at His Ascension, applying the benefit to ourselves.

(Taken from *The Deity of Christ and Other Sermons* by John Calvin. Newly translated from the French and Latin by Leroy Nixon. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1950.)

The CHALLENGE of the POST-CHRISTIAN AGE

by Hugh A. Koops

KENNETH SCOTT LATOURETTE, the noted Yale church historian has said: "Again and again we are told that we are now in the post-Christian era. Communism, emphatically anti-religious, has taken possession of fully a third of the human race. . . . Secularism has pervaded even more of the world. Church attendance in most of Western Europe is at a low ebb, both in Roman Catholic and Protestant lands. . . . Has Christianity dug its own grave?" Although Dr. Latourette affirms that "we are living in one of the great days of the Christian Church" he admits that there is a great deal of evidence to support the assertion that this is indeed the post-Christian era.

Just what is the post-Christian age? What kind of an era is this? It is as difficult to define the post-Christian individual as it is to define the Christian. But the answer must lie in the relationship of the individual to Jesus Christ, whose name he bears. The Christian is confident that all questions of ultimate concern, of fundamental importance, find an answer in the revelation of God, incarnate in Jesus Christ. The Christian may not know all the answers to all the problems related to his ultimate concern, but he believes that there is an answer in Jesus Christ. Though he knows not what the future holds, he knows who holds the future.

Not everyone believes that the issues of basic importance find an answer in God's self-revelation. There are many unbelievers. And they are not all alike in their unbelief. Some do not know Jesus Christ as the answer because they have never heard of him. These individuals we may call pre-Christian. In America today, however, there are very few who have never heard that faith in Jesus Christ provides the answer for the questions of finitude and evil. Poorly presented though the message may be, people in America today have heard the message. It is only such a situation that can give birth to the post-Christian age. For post-Christian is the individual who does not not believe that Jesus Christ is the answer; positively affirms that Jesus Christ is not the swer. The post-Christian has looked at Chri anity and has found it wanting.

This is the kind of age in which we in Amer are living. Of course there are "pockets" in culture where the post-Christian is especially pr ent. And there are other areas where his influe is meager. The post-Christian mind has reached all the corners of our culture. But the d couraging feature is that in areas of leadersh and scholarship the post-Christian mentality is cidedly prominent. It is only with tongue in che that many in our land worship the epithets of ancestor's faith, already in the grave.

Every age presents to Christianity its peculi problems. Usually Christianity eagerly takes the problems, confident that in Jesus Christ a sol tion is to be found. Today, however, Christiani is puzzled, as it must be, by the post-Christian er How must it address the post-Christian mind? Th question is especially pertinent for the Christia Reformed Church. Our church is only beginnin to see the post-Christian challenge. Just how a we to speak, as representatives of historic Chri tianity, to an age which insists that our answe Jesus Christ, is no longer adequate?

WE ARE, as a church, increasingly facing th challenge of post-Christianity. This is ver simply the result of our recent effort in domesti evangelization. For many years our church coul do, so we thought, little more than address th Christian. Then there came the time when w realized that more was demanded of us. We bega to reach out. We tried to speak to the pre-Chris tian. We initiated our foreign mission program Even though the Indian mission field is located o this continent we called this work foreign mis sions. We recognized its similarity to foreign mis sions. We realized that we were addressing th pre-Christian mind. And now, finally, we are fac ing the fact that there is also a post-Christian cha lenge. Into this area we have sent our home mis sionaries.

This is the unique challenge of home missions the challenge of addressing the post-Christia mind. Although the foreign missionary, the loca minister, and the home missionary all bring a mes sage from the same Book about the same Savio they speak to different people. The foreign mis sionary speaks to the pre-Christian. The ministe addresses the Christian. And the home missionar speaks to the post-Christian.

Of course this scheme, like many schemes, i simplistic. Even the African native, though hav

no prior contact with Christianity, has had tact with the Christian God, through natural elation and common grace. Within the Chris- church there are also many who are not truly ristian. And although the post-Christian age o great extent, here, I do not believe this age ully upon us. Seldom does even the home mis- ary work with a majority of post-Christian in- iduals. The nucleus within which he operates Christian, and many of those whom he intro- es to Christ are largely pre-Christian. Yet if re is any justification for distinguishing be- en the foreign missionary, the local pastor, and home missionary, it is here. The foreign mis- ary speaks to the pre-Christian; the local pas- addresses the Christian community; and the ne missionary tries to speak to the post-Chris- n mind.

he unique characteristic of home mission work, tinguishing it from the work of others who nd their lives in the communication of the life ich is in Christ, is its presentation of the mes- e to a people who have heard *of* it before and e rejected what they have heard. The home ssionary is reaching a people who have had ough to do, as far as they are concerned, with ristianity.

This can most readily be seen when we observe e method followed in opening a home mission d. The best way to know a community, and to eak of one's concern for it, is through a can- ss. This canvass is conducted in order that the ssage may be focused more directly on the rticular group which can be expected to be more sponsive to the message of the Word. The point approach to those canvassed is always their ation to Christianity, if not a dynamic Christi- ity at least the only Christianity they have come know. The three questions on the top of the nvass card always ask: "Are you a member of church?" If so: "With what church are you iliated?" And: "Do you attend regularly and ke an active part in the church to which you long?" The home missionary begins by endeav- ing to discover how intimate this relationship Christianity has been. He assumes prior con- ct with Christianity.

THIS FEATURE of home mission work presents the greatest problem the home missionary ces. All too often the Christianity that is known the people of the community is not Christianity all. The church such people know has lost her rtical dimension. She is very much like a coun- y club, exerting the same kind of pressure toward ayment of membership dues. Or better, she is an rganization exerting pressure toward social re- rm. But she is a church that has taken to wor- shipping herself. The church tries to present Christianity, but she does not present the Christ. In the post-Christian age the church becomes the greatest enemy of the home mission effort. Of course, the church which becomes the enemy of Christ is not any one denomination, and certainly the enemy of the Christ is not the church as "the body of Christ." The church which has become the enemy of the Christ and the Christian is the church as she appears to Americans today, ecclesiastically organized American Christianity.

In the first place, the church stands in the way of the home missionary. The church is a stumbling block. Immediately when he introduces himself as a representative of a certain denomination he places a barrier between himself and the other person which must eventually be overcome. No matter how sincere his interest in the individual may be, it will take some time for the home missionary to convince the people with whom he works that he is personally interested in them. They will see his interest in the growth of his particular denomination. They see his interest in the size of the weekly offering. They will not soon see his interest in their souls. No matter how good a job he may be doing, he is still doing his job, and he's getting paid for it. He has not gone out of his way. He has made no sacrifice. He has not gone the "second mile." Here the home missionary is at a distinct disadvantage. His motives can easily be misunderstood. Every member of the church has at least this advantage over the brothers of the cloth: he is not immediately recognized as a representative of an ecclesiastical organization.

Secondly, and far more seriously, the church also stands in the way of the object, the person to whom the invitation is addressed. The very approach of the canvass can make this readily apparent. Once the canvasser has received the information desired — the object's relation to the church — he must make use of this information. But the information is seldom useful. The discovery of the individual's relation to the church, to organized Christianity, generally says nothing about the individual's relation to Jesus Christ. A false ecclesiastical patriotism has obscured the message of the true church.

IF IT IS TRUE that this is the post-Christian age, and if this corollary holds — that the church has become the chief opponent or obstacle in the way of the message of salvation — then our recognition of this fact should help us in our evangelization endeavor. We must deal with the post-Christian mind; we must deal with the church. We must ask ourselves how we are to speak to the post-Christian mind, and to the degenerate church. It is here that we find our most pressing difficulty.

No one individual embodies the peculiar characteristics of his age in their entirety. We may label the mind of a certain community as post-Christian. It is more difficult to call any individual post-Christian. On this fact our home mission program capitalizes. We address either the pre-Christian or the Christian features of the mind of the object. Our work with children, in many cases the most fruitful in the home mission program, is a work with the pre-Christian mind. Children find Jesus Christ important, although their parents, never having found Christ in Christianity, had formerly dismissed both Christ and their children's interest, with a condoning smile. The home missionary finds novelty on his side when he deals with children, much as the foreign missionary finds novelty on his side when engaged in his task. The missionary also directs his programs toward the remnants of the Christian culture still engrained in the object, whether the object consciously recognizes them or not. The home missionary, for instance, finds a point of contact in the commonly accepted Christian morality, if nothing else.

But this does not address the post-Christian mind. This is not a frontal attack. And it may be best for us to begin by considering whether the post-Christian era can be addressed at all by Christianity. Perhaps the post-Christian has committed the sin against the Holy Spirit. Or perhaps the post-Christian culture commits this sin. It seems, when one considers the history of Christianity in northern Africa or New England, that this sin can be committed by cultures as well as by individuals. Forgiveness cannot be given when it is not received. Perhaps we are to shake the dust off our feet and speak only to the pre-Christian and the Christian. Certainly this fearful possibility makes more urgent the necessity of bringing the gospel before the post-Christian age envelopes our land.

IF WE ARE to address the post-Christian mind at all there seem to be but two directions in which we can go. The first demands an immediate and far-reaching improvement of Christianity, especially the organized representative of Christianity, the church. The church may never have an attitude of superiority, no matter how little she can sympathize with the post-Christian, even when her message is rejected. The church must rather be penitent before God and the world for having presented a Christianity that has not always presented the Christ. The world has had the right to expect much more from us. In our failure we have done the world wrong. We as a church must apologize. It is as much our fault as the fault of the post-Christian that we have been found wanting by the post-Christian mind. The Christian Reformed Church might wish she could absolve herself from blame in promoting the post-Christian ment But she can do so only by insisting that she not been found wanting, and this she can do by admitting that she has not been found on scene at all.

The possibility of working within the ch however, for a more potent Christianity is r most difficult by ecclesiastical structuration. revival is almost from the outset limited very n to denominational lines. And any successful gram must transcend denominational lines. M ing the post-Christian mind demands a chang the part of the church, a change so drastic many will fear that the church herself will appear. But the church should not fear for self. She should rather be willing to sacrifice self. It is only in her willingness to serve her L that she has any assurance of her own survi

THE ALTERNATIVE is, then, to work around or yond, at least differently from, the proced used by the organized church in the past. The s cess of the Billy Graham campaigns at least be ons us to consider this possibility. We must alw remember, however, that any change is bu change in form. The content of the mess which the church must bring must always rem the same. But the method of presentation vary according to the mentality of the audience, cording to whether it is pre-Christian, Christi or post-Christian.

In addressing the post-Christian mind the ho missionary finds his imagination taxed to the li in the search for a successful method of presen tion. The post-Christian mind desires a change the form of the worship services. The liturgy Christian has come to love is not greatly app ciated by the post-Christian. It is, rather, f quently misinterpreted. It may be better to cha the service, to give it an informality in keepi with modern suburbia. The informal discuss rather than the formal sermon is demanded by post-Christian mind. In an age in which questi are being asked it would be wise to find room questions in the service. This sort of service v be more demanding on the leader of the serv but more profitable for post-Christian participa Also, in an age in which there is little respect authority, it would be wise to avoid a display ecclesiastical or ministerial authority, recogni and appreciated though this authority be by Christian.

We must not only consider a change in form of the service, but a change in the form the message as well. The explicit use of a cr is not at all appealing to the post-Christian mi Preaching from the Heidelberg Catechism, sou of comfort to the Christian, is most misleading

post-Christian. The assurance of the Cate-sm, "That I with body and soul, both in life and th, am not my own, but belong unto my faith- Saviour Jesus Christ," is simply not the com- t of the post-Christian. These words not only k authority for the post-Christian; they simply not addressed to him. If a creed is to be used all, the Belgic Confession should be used. It is be questioned, however, whether the way of dom recommends the explicit use of a creed all.

We must also consider a change in the form of esentation of some of our most cherished doc- nes. If doctrine is to be presented at all (as it ist), it must be done in such a way as to show relevance to life. Because doctrine is relevant to e, a different way of life will demand a different esentation of a doctrine. The post-Christian e demands a reinterpretation of doctrine, a re- erpretation which relates the doctrine to the ex- ential situation.

To illustrate a change in interpretation of doc- ne demanded by a change in the way of life, I uld like to use the doctrine of the covenant, es- cially of membership within the covenantal re- ionship. When the covenant was founded with raham, membership included all those for whom raham was responsible. Thus his servants as ell as his sons were circumcized. Membership as not, even in the beginning, limited to those of ysical descent. Membership was conditioned by sponsibility. Those for whom Abraham was re- onsible were included within the covenant. But sponsibility has changed greatly since Abra- am's day. There may be some features of this hange which we do not like; there are others ith which we must agree. For instance, the end slavery released the slave from his master's re- onsibility, and thus also from covenantal mem- ership. In a day when responsibility is largely in- rpreted in individualistic terms, whether we may ke it or not, there is certain to be a change in e relevance of this doctrine.

The solution, however, is not to be found by mply considering the smaller size of present-day ouseholds. For modern means of transportation nd communication also give us wider responsibil- y. Seeing that membership within the covenant annot be limited to blood lines, it is time for us to onsider what the doctrine of the covenant means n a post-Christian world. Since the condition for nembership within the covenant is the same as he condition for salvation, faith, it is very difficult o define the limits of covenantal responsibility. Surely the doctrine of the covenant does not limit ur responsibility to bring the message of salva- ion. The covenant does not limit responsibility; ather responsibility defines the limits of cove- antal cooperation and membership. Our cove- nantal obligations include a great deal more than simply sending our children to a Christian day school.

Not only will there be a change in our use of our creeds, and in our use of doctrine, but the post-Christian mind also demands a change in our use of the Bible. This is not a suggestion that the message be changed. This we may not do. But I am suggesting that it may be advisable to change our use of Scripture. The common practice of preaching from a text, though dearly loved by the Christian, may be and frequently is repulsive to the post-Christian. Our standard criticism of many modern pulpits, that only book reviews are presented, is far too superficial. What are we to say of Paul, who used for his text an inscription on a pagan altar and a quotation from a pagan poet? It is noteworthy that Paul appealed to Scripture where the authority of Scripture was recognized, when he spoke to the Jews in their synagogues. But when he addressed the mob at Lystra and the council at Athens he did not appeal to the authority of the inscripturated Word. His message was surely biblical. He began with creation and he concluded with judgment. But there was no ready appeal to an unrecognized authority.

In the post-Christian world we will also ask how pertinent are the methods used by Paul. To insist that the methods used by Paul must also be used by the church today is excellent, when one considers similar situations. The methods used by Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, were fruitful in the pre-Christian era, and can still be used with profit in pre-Christian witnessing. But to assert that the situation today is the same as it was two thousand years ago is to assert that Christianity has accomplished nothing in two thousand years. This is true in many areas. It is not true in Europe and the United States. We must display Paul's reliance on the Holy Spirit in discovering how we are to speak in the modern world.

NOT ONLY does recognition of the post-Christian nature of our world suggest changes regarding the form of our worship services and the method of presentation of the gospel. It also suggests the direction in which solutions to some of our most pressing problems are to be found.

One of our pressing difficulties concerns the requirements for church membership. On the one hand the Christian Reformed Church is afraid to grant membership merely upon the confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. On the other hand our church is afraid, lest she become sectarian, to ask for more. It is certainly true that the only condition for membership and fellowship within the church is faith in Jesus Christ. This is all the church may ask of those who desire to join her.

On the foreign mission field the missionary defines the terms used by the convert. He has already instructed the mission object regarding the meaning of his confession. He is sure that the words are used in their Scriptural sense. Thus this confession, simple though it be, is all the church may ask of the pre-Christian. In the post-Christian community, however, the terms of this confession are usually lacking in Scriptural content. The home missionary must once again load the terms with Scriptural meaning. Because this is difficult, it may be better to use other words.

Thus different words will carry the same confession. The old vocabulary, sufficient in the pre-Christian setting, demands translation into post-Christian terms. These terms will likely differ from the terms used by the Christian in making his confession, or the pre-Christian in his confession. But the confession will be the same. This confession, faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, in the Scriptural sense of the word, is all the church may demand.

We are also faced with the question of church membership for members of secret organizations, especially the Masonic Order. Again, reckoning with the post-Christian nature of our world, a solution is suggested. One of the features so prominent in the post-Christian world is the lack of religious commitment required even by the church, the religious organization. If this lack of religious commitment is to be found in those organizations which are supposedly and recognizedly religious, how much greater will be the lack of religious commitment on the part of members of such organizations as Freemasonry which are not recognized as being religious by the post-Christian. We may reply that there is no organization without a religious commitment, that the organization either serves God or mammon. But are we sure that this must be said of organizations, or can be said of institutions? Jesus said this of individuals. It would be much easier for us if we could say this of organizations. The actual situation in a post-Christian world is nowhere so simple.

Let us also, for a moment, consider the problem of divorce and remarriage. Perhaps the crucial issue is not found in either divorce or remarriage. In a post-Christian world it may be best to examine the original marriage, and question whether it is really always a marriage. Is it not possible that many of our legally divorced couples were never really married at all? Many of these marriages are only legalized adultery. In a pre-Christian world a union of this kind is not considered the equal of Christian marriage. But in the post-Christian age such a union is graced with the Christian term, marriage. What God has joined together man is not to separate. But these words speak of an institution which is a joining together; they do not state that every marriage is a divine union. riage does not mean the same thing for every

Surely the Christian recognizes that some is wrong when the term describing his rela ship to his wife is also used to describe the tionship between Tommy Manville and Wife 11. There is support for the suggestion tha delineate clearly between Christian marriages post-Christian marriages. What the church do is defend and promote the Christian concep marriage. But she must also recognize the that many marriages in no way approach Christian ideal.

These are but some suggestions of the help can receive by recognizing the post-Christian ture of our home mission challenge.

BECAUSE it is the home missionary who directly faces the post-Christian world, i the home missionary who raises these quest concerning our confrontation of the post-Chris world with the gospel. The questions the ho missionary (used as the symbol for all those ognizing this challenge) asks of the church are ways embarrassing. They always demand of church a good measure of self-appraisal and s criticism. It must be so. For these questions not simply questions asked by a few individu who see the challenge of post-Christianity. Th are questions raised by the very fact that church recognizes her need for home missionari It is not so much who a home missionary may or what a home missionary may say, but the ve fact that the church needs home missionari which causes embarrassment.

The church is always embarrassed by the pr ence of the post-Christian age. The church fin it difficult to believe that there are many who rej her message, and thus so easily dismiss her Lo The home missionary is the one the church points to meet the post-Christian age, to wash h dirty linen, to make an appetizing meal out of h leftovers. Addressing the post-Christian age is li building a house, not out of new lumber, but us wood. The saw of the message runs into ma nails and screws before a temple fit for the Spi is constructed. The home missionary works with pig-iron but with tempered metal. The an Christian temper must be removed before metal can be tempered with the Spirit of Christ.

Let us not be afraid of the post-Christian e But surely let us not be complacent either. T church must meet the challenge. To do so she m adapt herself to the challenge of post-Christiani It is only in losing herself in this way that s shall find herself. This is precisely the glory the church, that she can spend herself and be sp in her Master's service.

JOHN GELOCK

by Jacob G. Vanden Bosch

IS THE PRACTICE of several churches in America arouse in lay members a sense of their im-tance in the life of the church. After summer lation is over and before activities are resumed the fall, a Sunday is set aside in which laymen invited to conduct divine services. Whatever e may think of this practice, one cannot deny t laymen at various times in the history of the urch have exercised leadership. To ignore them to minimize their services would be ungrateful. the Christian Reformed denomination, too, lay mbers have taken a prominent part. In fact, me have initiated action that led to its founding. the First Church of Grand Rapids laymen, not pastor, took the initiative.

The name of one of these men was Jan Gelok, er Americanized to John Gelock. He was born the southern part of the Netherlands near the t where our first American Roosevelt hailed om — Oud-Vassemeer. He might have grown to be a Roman Catholic, for during the first ur years of his life he was lovingly cared for in e home of a well-to-do grandfather who was an dent devotee of this faith, but in the providence God he was restored to his poor but protestant rents who embraced the Reformed faith.

A true boy, he did his share of mischief, but hen he reached his fifteenth year, Gelock un-rwent a change. He began to think seriously bout his sins, his accountability to God, and his lvation. Sin was not something to be thought lightly and to be trifled with. It made man guilty efore God. He struggled, agonized, prayed, and restled with the problem of his salvation. Mo-ents of self-condemnation alternated with mo-ents of peace and joy in the Lord. The time fi-ally came that he knew himself to be a child of od. Though he did not parade his Christian faith, thers took note of him that he was a Christian and sked him to lead in prayer and to speak in public atherings. In due time, he made confession of his aith in his church which was one of a group that tyled itself the "Church under the Cross."

OF THE HARSH TREATMENT to which adherents of the Secession were subject, Gelock was not merely a witness, but he was also personally in-volved in it. There was an old law on the statute book, made in the days when the fortunes of Hol-and were controlled by Napoleon, that no assem-blies numbering more than nineteen souls were al-lowed. For transgressing this law Gelock was re-peatedly fined until his debt amounted to twelve hundred guilders. He was warned that failure to pay would result in imprisonment. Worried, he resorted to prayer. A gracious providence so directed the course of events that at the critical moment word was received from the highest authority that the law did not apply to religious assemblies, and that the penalty was set aside.

For a livelihood Gelock pursued the trade of his father, that of wagonmaker. He married and purchased a business of his own, which owing to adverse circumstances beyond his control he was compelled to sell. In these days there was much talk about going to America, the land of promise. Rev. Cornelius Vander Meulen had already led his group of emigrants to the New World three years before. The spirit that animated them was contagious. Gelock also decided to emigrate. So in the year 1850 he with his family — his wife having died, he had married again — set out for America, the land of freedom and opportunity, and arrived at Rochester, New York, where lived his brother who had preceded him. He did not remain here, but pressed on until he came to Grand Rapids, his final destination. In this city of his choice, he practised his own trade in a shop situated on the corner of Market and Louis Streets.

The young wagonmaker enjoyed a measure of prosperity. America was for him a haven of liberty and a land of opportunity. This he appreciated and for this he was profoundly thankful. He was not slow in helping many of his countrymen in the old home to come to these shores to enjoy the blessings that were his. Had he been of an acquisitive turn of mind, he might have thrown himself into the mad scramble for earthly possessions that characterized the second quarter of the century. He did not do so. He gave a good measure of his time and energy to the church and its well-being.

ACQUAINTANCES prevailed upon Mr. Gelock to join the Second Reformed Church. It was not long before his qualities as a sterling Christian and a faithful churchman were recognized and he was chosen to be a member of the consistory, first as deacon and later as elder. But he was not happy in his church affiliation. Certain things that he had observed and experienced, together with reports concerning the church in the East by those who had first-hand acquaintance, made him increasingly unhappy and dissatisfied until dissatisfaction

culminated in resignation already in 1856, a year before the separation took place. The number of dissenters grew and became so large that a congregation was organized. This congregation, comprising about half of the old, was one of the four original ones that constituted the Christian Reformed Church in the beginning.

The motives that led Mr. Gelock to take this momentous step are recorded for us in some of his writings. He lamented the fact that the colonists knew and could know very little about the denomination they had joined, because their ignorance of the English language and their remoteness from New York and New Jersey, its centers and stronghold, were obstacles preventing a thorough investigation and acquaintance. He mentioned Dr. Van Raalte's and Rev. Vander Meulen's insistent plea for the circulation of Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, a book good enough in various ways, but which to Gelock and others had an Arminian slant. The decision of synod to allow open communion, permitting even strangers to partake of the bread and wine, was to him a departure from sound Reformed practice. A sermon preached by a minister of a neighboring church, in which man in his natural state was declared to be sick, but able to accept his own salvation, a view accepted by several in his church, furnished ground for dissatisfaction. The practice of changing pulpits with ministers of other denominations and the singing of hymns had the effect of confirming his suspicion that all was not well. Rumors spread by those who had lived in the East that the Heidelberg Catechism was not preached, that catechetical instruction was a thing of the past, that discipline was neglected, and that Free Masons were allowed to be members of the church aggravated his fears, Such other rumors as that in a certain church an elder had none of his nine children baptized, and that in another place a lady had left the Presbyterian Church for the Reformed Church because she did not care to listen to sermons on election, made him more uneasy still. When appeals were made to classis in regard to some of these matters, classis refused to listen and replied that the protestants were animated by an evil spirit and that a service of prayer should be held for exercising that spirit. In view of all this, is it any wonder that Gelock and others availed themselves of the assurance given by Dr. Wyckoff that "they would be most perfectly free at any time they found an ecclesiastical connection opposed to their religious prosperity and enjoyment, to bid us a fraternal adieu and be by themselves"?

Mr. Gelock had thus become the founder of a new denomination, but he did not involve himself in this momentous venture as a petty faultfinder. He did so as the result of strong convictions. In the homeland he had been an intelligent follower of the leaders of the Secession, so that he had developed a keen sense of what was sound and was unsound. His coming to America did not him to lose this power of discernment or his victions. Though two of his fellow elders, had also been leaders in the founding of the church, resigned and left the group for a whil remained loyal. When in later years he revi the course he had taken, he was not led to doub rightness of his course. He defended it.

IN THE OFFICIAL LIFE of the church. Mr. G took a prominent part. In 1872, together ex-elder J. De Jonge and deacon B. De Graa represented his denomination at the synod of Christian Reformed Church in The Netherla They were not accorded a hearty welcome. T were told that they had not been invited. Profe Brummelkamp of the Theological School at K pen, an influential man in the councils of his nomination, was a brother-in-law of Dr. Raalte, a fact which partly explains the unfrie attitude of the Dutch church. Not until afte long debate were they seated and recognized delegates. When at the twenty-first session and his fellow delegates left synod, Mr. Ge spoke a few words of farewell, assuring the br ren that the separation in America had not b motivated by petty considerations or enmity solely by the desire to conserve the Reformed fa The president of synod responded that, much the brethren in Holland loved them for their alty to Reformed truth, ecclesiastically they co not acknowledge them.

In still other ways Gelock upheld the honor his church and did it well. Rev. B. De Bey a Rev. A. Zwemer, in a pamphlet published in 18 criticized the Christian Reformed Church a denied its right to an independent existence, tributing its origin to the spirit of revolution a to being misled through ignorance. Gelock did allow these accusations to remain unchalleng He took up the cudgels in her behalf in *De Wach* and rose to her defense. He asserted that the pa phlet was built upon misrepresentations and p ceeded to set the record straight.

Occasionally he unburdened himself in *De Wa ter* in respect to other matters. So, for examp when some favored the introduction of hymns public worship, he counseled that the issue dropped because in the homeland it had evo bitter controversy. In later years, he complai that preaching was becoming too objective and not do justice to the experiential value of Scr tural truth. And in the controversy which ar about the nature of the covenant of grace he h that only the elect are in the covenant.

Seven years after the organization of the Fi Church, the consistory deemed it proper that minutes should be prefaced by a brief account

origin of the church. It requested Mr. Gelock compose it. It is a worthy document, free from erities and setting forth in a simple and pointed nner the history of its founding. Translated by f. A. E. Broene, the document has been printed *Centennial,* published by First Church, where it propriately occupies an honored place.

The last ecclesiastical event in which Gelock k an active part and displayed his soundness of lgment and courage was the movement toward nericanization. Having lived in America almost ty years, he understood the mind of the rising neration. Sympathizing with the movement, he vored the organization of an English-speaking urch and refused to represent his consistory at ssis because he could not conscientiously defend hostile attitude of Rev. J. H. Vos and the ma- ity of the consistory. As soon as he could be ned the newly organized church. In February 1887 the organization was effected and in the me year he was elected one of its elders. He filled s position till death terminated his services in 89.

MR. GELOCK had his share of the ills to which mortals are subject. Thrice he followed the mains of a beloved wife to their last resting aces. Shortly after his arrival in America he was itten with the same sickness that had torn his cond wife from his side. He was so ill that his life as despaired of, but God graciously raised him om his sick bed and spared him for years of rvice in community and church. In 1851 he lost daughter and many years later a son, who, flicted with tuberculosis, had gone to California quest of health. In 1874 he married the widow Rev. Fredrikus Hulst, and again enjoyed marital iss.

Though reared in an atmosphere where mysticism flourished and an admirer of Rev. H. J. Budding, that eccentric mystical preacher who found it hard to cooperate with the leaders of the Secession, yet a leader of the movement in the province of Zeeland in its early years, Gelock nevertheless was Reformed in his outlook. He remained loyal to the church he had helped to found. During the 1870's a number of members of the First Church seceded to establish a Nederduitsch parish, but in Gelock these folk found no support. Labadism, he said, is not Reformed, though if he were compelled to choose between Labadism and Liberalism, he would prefer the former. For more than thirty years he was an elder, and, faithful in office, always reelected. Frequently he attended classical and synodical meetings to represent his consistory and served on important committees.

We rise from the contemplation of the life of John Gelock, feeling that we have been in the presence, as it were, of a worthy character who nobly served the church of Christ. Balanced in judgment; moderate in expression; ready to yield in the interests of peace, but unyielding when a fundamental truth, as he saw it, was at stake; loved because of his open nature and friendliness; trusted because of his integrity, John Gelock was a leader of whose memory the church need not be ashamed. Though very likely not agreeing with his views on some minor issues, we must be fair and judge him in the light of his time. He loved the church and its work because he loved Christ. Thinking of him we are reminded of the sacred injunction, "Remember them who have the rule over you; who have spoken unto you the Word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation."

IN HIS PRESENCE

O you habitually thus unlock your heart and subject our thoughts to Almighty God? Are you living in this nviction of His Presence? And have you this special itness that the Presence is really set up within you unto our salvation, namely, that you live in the sense of it? Do ou believe, and act on the belief, that His light penetrates nd shines through your heart, as the sun's beams through room? You know how things look when the sun's beams re on it — the very air then appears full of impurities hich, before it came out, were not seen. So it is with ur souls. We are full of stains and corruptions, we see nem not, they are like the air before the sun shines; ut though we see them not, God sees them: He pervades s as the sunbeam. Our souls, in His view, are full of things hich offend, things which must be repented of, forgiven, nd put away. He, in the words of the Psalmist, "has set our misdeeds before Him, our secret sins in the light of His countenance." This is most true, though it be not at all welcome doctrine to many. We cannot hide ourselves from Him; and our wisdom, as our duty, lies in embracing this truth, acquiescing in it, and acting upon it. Let us then beg Him to teach us the Mystery of His Presence in us, that, by acknowledging it, we may thereby possess it fruitfully. Let us confess it in faith, that we may possess it unto justification. Let us so own it as to set Him before us in everything. "I have set God always before me," says the Psalmist, "for He is on my right hand, therefore I shall not fall." Let us in all circumstances thus regard Him. Whether we have sinned, let us not dare keep from Him, but, with the prodigal son, rise up and go to Him. Or, if we are conscious of nothing, still let us not boast in ourselves or justify ourselves, but feel that "He who judgeth us is the Lord" . . . . Let us have no secret apart from Him.

—JOHN HENRY NEWMAN

BOOK REVIEW —

IS THERE A CONFLICT BETWEEN GENESIS 1 AND NATURAL SCIENCE?

by N. H. Ridderbos, translated by John Vriend, 88 pp. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans (Pathway Books), 1957. $1.50

Reviewed by SIMON J. DE VRIES,
Instructor in Old Testament,
Drew University Theological School

The translator and the publisher of this little book have done an important service for English-speaking evangelicals by making available the thought of the Dutch *Gereformeerde* theologian Nicolaas H. Ridderbos on an ever-intriguing subject. This brochure first appeared as a *Referaat* for the "Thirty-Seventh Scientific Assembly" at the Free University in 1954, under the title, "Beschouwingen over Genesis I." It was also printed in *Geloof en Wetenschap* (LIII) [1955] 213-31). a journal for the interchange of opinion between *Gereformeerde* scientists and theologians. Prof. Ridderbos has further treated this topic in a shorter but even more forthright article, "De Betekenis van Genesis I," in *Bezinning* XI (1956)), pp. 76-89. In Holland these writings have stirred up considerable interest.

Prof. Ridderbos is well qualified to offer the new and challenging approach to the problem of Genesis I and natural science which this book contains. While he adheres staunchly to the Reformed view of verbal inspiration, he is in vital touch with the thinking of other Old Testament scholars, as with that of other theologians and scientists in general. In his doctoral dissertation of 1939, he earned praise from various theological camps for his competent and fearless criticism of Mowinckel's studies on the Psalms. A son of the Prof. Jan Ridderbos of Kampen and a brother of Herman Ridderbos, he is respected by scholars in his field not only for his entire proficiency in Old Testament exegesis, but especially for his refusal to tolerate the simplistic harmonization and dogmatic polemicism which have marred the biblical scholarship of so many conservatives, in Holland and elsewhere. This reviewer enjoyed the opportunity quite recently of interviewing Prof. Ridderbos concerning his views on Genesis I and about the aims of *Gereformeerde* biblical scholarship in general. It was plain that Ridderbos is looking for a more truly open-minded approach on the part of his church to the historical, cultural, and literary processes involved in the growth of Scripture. He recognizes that to stand still on this point is futile. There are questions which simply must be answered. What is of special significance is the fact that Ridderbos is seeking for answers nowhere else than in a more genuine exegesis of what the Bible itself says.

The title of the booklet under review would lead one to think that natural science is its major concern. Actually this is not of chief importance in the book. Ridderbos addresses Christian scientists, but he speaks as a theologian and as a biblical scholar. The apparent conflict between Genesis I and the results of natural science is mentioned (ch. 1), and some of the consequences of his theory for the relation between science and Scripture are spelled out (pp. 68ff), but it is plain that the author is primarily interested in exegesis. In his *Bezinning* article (p. 82), he emphasizes that this is his only intention and method. He says, "I am not concerned to introduce what may be called a somewhat freer interpretation." All he cares for is an answer to the question, "*Just what* is the thought which is here revealed to us " (italics and translation mine).

In the opening chapter of our booklet the author describes the various interpretations of Genesis I. Basically there are these three: (1) the realistic view, which takes the "days" in a literal sense; (2) the concordistic view, which believes that the "days" represent geological eras; and (3) the view that the arrangement into seven day some kind of literary device.

Ridderbos' predecessor, Aalders, one who has defended the reali theory, albeit in an altered fo Ridderbos criticizes it as flying necessarily in the face of scientific historical discovery, and as being consistent and arbitrary in its exeg (pp. 42ff). An especially telling ar ment is employed against this the in the *Bezinning* article (p. 80), wh what he says about the order of rangement applies equally well to interpretation of the entire narrati

> If a reader . . . is inclined to arg that the order of Gen. I is litera real, he can scarcely avoid the knowledgement that the order lowed in Gen. 2 is artificial. then the question arises, if writer of Gen. 2 allowed hims the freedom to arrange his mater in an artificial order, how can be so sure that the writer of Gen followed a strict chronological pr cedure?

Ridderbos' criticism of the conc distic theory is that it does exegeti violence to the simple meaning of t Hebrew, and that it attributes mo geological interest and understandi to the writer than can be consider likely. The third view is his own, will be inferred from the above cit tion, but he does not claim originali for it. It was propagated by t church fathers Philo of Alexandri Origen, and Augustine, it is popul with both Catholic and Protesta scholars today, and it has been adv cated within *Gereformeerde* circles such as Prof. A. Noordtzij in his *Goo Woord en der eeuwen getuigenis* ar by G. Sizoo in *De Ouderdom d aarde*. It is also the view of Th. Vriezen's important work, *Hoofdlijn der theologie van het Oude Testamen*

The author seeks to show that t very data of Genesis I requires wh he calls a "framework-hypothesis. Although he does not offer a detaile commentary on the chapter. he do touch upon the most salient points especially pp. 56-61), emphasizing t schematic arrangement and paralle ism, all culminating in the seventh da the day of rest. It should be apparen argues Ridderbos, that the writer *tended* to portray creation in a sy tematic, schematic order. This ma be called, simply, a literary framewor He explains (p. 45):

> By the framework-hypothesis mean the following. In Genesis

e inspired author offers us a ory of creation. It is not his in- nt, however. to present an exact port of what happened at crea- on. By speaking of the eightfold ork of God he impresses the read- with the fact that all that exists as been created by God. This ghtfold work he places in a frame- ork (Dutch: *kader*): he distrib- es it over six days, to which he lds a seventh day as the day of st. In this manner he gives ex- ression to the fact that the work creation is complete; also that the conclusion of His work God an rest, take delight in the result; nd also . . . that in celebrating the abbath man must be God's imi- ator. The manner in which the orks of creation have been dis- ributed over six days is not arbi- rary.

should be made clear that Ridder- does not deny the *possibility* that might actually have created the ld in a schematic order. "Nat- ly that is possible," he writes in *Bezinning* article (p. 79). "Who we, that we should determine how shall or shall not have proceed- ' But that is not the issue. The e is simply, what did the writer of esis 1 intend? Our problem is narily exegetical, and only sec- arily theological. On this basis, is far more likely that the schematic er (of Gen. I) originated with the rary method of the writer (*idem*)."

Ridderbos goes on to supplement discussion with evidence that a ical or schematic arrangement is a y common phenomenon in the Bible g., II Kings 23:4ff; Psa. 78:44ff; tt. 4:1ff compared with Luke 4:1ff), phasizing that *either* Genesis I *or* nesis 2 has to be in schematic and chronological order (see above). us the Bible itself offers good analo- s.

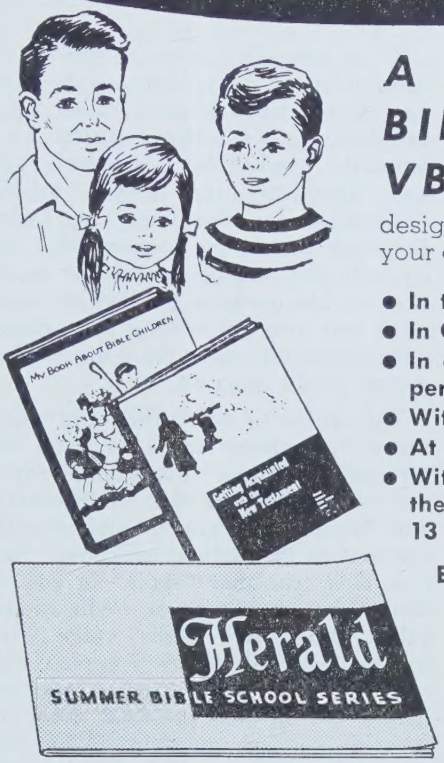
A very important question which dderbos deals with more pointedly his *Bezinning* article (pp. 77, 81) ncerns the purpose which the writer Genesis I had in mind in employing s literary device. That purpose was emphasize that the work of creation perfect, that everything created has en made for the glory of God. ven is the number of completeness d perfection. Thus God rests and joices on the seventh day because thing is lacking in his work. Every- ing is "very good."

But the writer also had the pur- se of providing an explicit theolog- ical basis for keeping the Sabbath. As bearers of the divine image and hence imitators of God, men are to reflect their Creator's sovereign satisfaction in his perfect work. This deeply theological but non-chronological interpretation leaves completely open the question of the origin of the Sabbath. Ridderbos faces this gap honestly in his *Bezinning* article, where he confesses (p. 81), "We do not know precisely how the Israelite was brought to the practice of working exactly six days and resting for one day. But in any case we must see in this the leading of God." What matters is that the keeping of the Sabbath is very definitely a memorial of God's holy and praiseworthy act of creation, as the motivation-clause in the fourth commandment clearly states (cf. pp. 40ff).

Such refreshing frankness and open-mindedness is a quality which has been sorely lacking in much orthodox interpretation. It is an attitude which promises much. Why not let the Bible be its own interpreter? Why should Christians hamper themselves by methodologies which the Bible itself neither requires nor justifies? Christian scholars should recognize more candidly the employment of diverse literary types and frameworks in the composition of Scripture. They should take more seriously the cultural and historical conditioning of the primitive people to whom the Almighty gave His Word.

Prof. Ridderbos has not as yet, to this reviewer's knowledge, made wide use of the method which he has here exhibited. It is understandable that he is cautious in stating possibilities of a wider application. (The *Bezinning* article is considerably more explicit in this regard than the original brochure, and hence has been freely alluded to in this review.) At any rate, it seems to this reviewer that Ridderbos has given us a proper example of how Christians must proceed in studying Scripture. What Ridderbos has done for Genesis I may and ought to be done for other passages. We may be sure that rich rewards await those who explore the Bible with an open and reverent mind, asking it to interpret itself.

HERALD Summer Bible School Series



A PERMANENT BIBLE-TEACHING VBS CURRICULUM

designed to achieve spiritual results in your community by educating your pupils:

- **In the Scriptures**
- **In Christian Character**
- **In everyday Christian living and strong personal witness**
- **With proved lessons**
- **At his grade level**
- **With progressive development of Bible themes from one grade to the next—for 13 years**

EDUCATIONAL — INTERESTING
ENJOYABLE — PRACTICAL

Also available in Spanish, German and French.

For complete information write for free illustrated brochure.

At Your Local Bookstore

HERALD PRESS Dept. RJ Scottdale, Pa.

Our 50th Year of Christian Literature Service

MOSES' MIGHTY MEN

by Herschel H. Hobbs

Aaron, Hur, Caleb, Bezaleel, even Pharaoh himself contributed to Moses' greatness. Besides being an inspiring story, this book points out to ministers and laymen parallels between their responsibilities and those of Moses and the men around him. Especially helpful in leading men in your church to see their usefulness and importance in God's work. $2.50

At your bookstore

BROADMAN PRESS,
B P Nashville 3, Tennessee

21st EDITION

Halley's Bible Handbook

{Formerly known as "Pocket Bible Handbook"}

Book OF a Lifetime . . . FOR a Lifetime
Loved alike by . . . Young and Old
Widely Used in Colleges and Seminaries
Highly Commended by leading Magazines
Specially Useful for S. S. Teachers

It is an Abbreviated Bible Commentary, with Notes on Books of the Bible, their Historical, Geographical and Chronological Backgrounds, with 75 Illustrative Maps:

Amazing Archaeological Discoveries, Confirming or Illustrating Bible History, with 78 Authentic Photographic Reproductions:

Related Historical Data from the Annals of Babylon, Egypt, Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome, touching the Bible Story:

How We Got the Bible, Formation of Old and New Testaments, Apocryphal Books, Manuscripts and Early Christian Writings:

An Epitome of Church History, Connecting Bible Times with Our Own; Early Church Fathers, Persecutions, Rise of the Papacy, the Popes, Luther and the Reformation.

Now Contains Select Bible Verses. There is nothing published, of its size, that has anything like as much practical Biblical information.

{Further particulars sent on request}

4 x 6½ x 1½ inches

956 Pages Cloth Bound $3.00

Order from your Bookstore or

H.H.HALLEY, Box 774, Chicago 90, Ill.

LETTERS TO THE JOURNA

DEAR SIRS:

It is not often that a person engrossed in the daily affairs of the business world finds himself called upon to challenge an article written in a scholarly journal by a scholarly person. However, the recent article, "Education for Freedom," by Lester DeKoster cannot go unanswered. Apparently the author sensed the weakness of his position by inviting comment and also by writing in a rather more emotional tone than the subject matter might warrant.

The failure to define the term "vocational" adequately leads to some unfortunate positions. For example, it is not necessarily true that "intellectual" and "vocational" are as diametrically opposed as this article indicates. Neither is it true that "skills" in and of themselves have great educational value. What gives "skills" value is the use they are put to by a person who has been educated. Mr. DeKoster makes the further practical error of ignoring the age question of the student. The author also seems to rely most heavily on second-hand information.

I believe that a little research in the history of vocational education in Mr. DeKoster's own town and some discussion with business people would have been most fruitful. For example, the rather impractical suggestions of Professor Whitehead, so extensively quoted under point four, raise more questions than they solve. No one who has studied under a good teacher will readily admit to having studied "Algebra, from which nothing follows," etc. Neither will many persons agree to the educational value of surveying, with its time consuming and unproductive movements of bulky instruments.

The example used to fortify Mr. DeKoster's second major point completely ignores the basic problems of age. The "penal inmate" cannot be equated with the student. For the inmate the time of formal education is past; society only wants to rehabilitate him. The student, however, is precisely at the stage where formal education is required.

When a child enters the grades he is unformed, and only educational discipline will form him into an educated person. This formative process must be seen in the broadest scope, and to introduce manual arts, which are hopelessly outdated, is only to hamper this process. At which age would you make a student in the grades choose betw woodworking, metalworking, print mechanics or what have you? On w is a student to base this choice? W course would he drop to make ro for this "practical" subject? Would be history, which takes him out of narrow environment, or language a literature, which prepare him to en the *Reformed Journal* rather than comics, or possibly science and mat matics, which teach him the orderlin of the world in which he lives?

The similarity between Prof. DeK ter's views and those which brought rise in Business Administration Scho is remarkable. Educate for use a never mind if this neglects intellect integrity. The result has been that Business Administration graduate is the least demand and has one of lowest reputations of all graduates. dustry wants a person who is broa educated, who can think logically, spe effectively and above all has learned t value of a disciplined and recepti mind. The necessary skills can added easily enough as needed. Su a person does not go through life we ing vocational blinkers put on at a ti his horizons should have been e panding.

Undoubtedly at times in educatio history the theoretical has be divorced from its practical implicatio There also is need for vocational *gu ance* at the high school level. Howev these considerations do not warrant t basic changes Mr. DeKoster advocat My opinion is that a strong re-empha on scholastic-intellectual requiremer will be much more productive both f the student and for the society in whi he must live.

Sincerely,

PAUL C. VAN LONKHUYZEN

Grand Rapids, Michigan

SIRS:

Please allow me space to comme on Dr. Daane's reply to my letter r garding his editorial, "The State Theology in the Church."

Usually it is necessary for prop discussion to define terms, but I a sumed that all Reformed theologia would mean the same by the ter "Divine Sovereignty." How Dr. Daa deduced from my letter that to r Divine sovereignty is a "highly a stract" concept is a mystery. But I know that Dr. Daane and I mean n at all the same by this concept.

Daane's idea, to say the least, is el. He says: "I believe that in the le God's sovereignty is defined *in tionship to grace and not apart m it.* [I underscore.] In Biblical ught God is sovereign . . . in the se that He is absolutely free to nt or withhold grace, to have mercy on whom He wills, and to harden om He wills. . . . In short, in Bibl thought the sovereignty of God is ined *in terms of His freedom to be cious . . .*" [I again underscore.]

Daane does write more about d's sovereignty, but the rest is what understands it *not* to be. The quo ion as given constitutes Daane's finition of God's sovereignty, posi ely expressed. For Daane God's vereignty means, God's freedom to give or not forgive sin. To my nd, this is one tiny segment of the ole truth. Indeed Divine sover gnty is not limited to the truth taught Rom. 9:18 and kindred passages of e Scripture.

I have nothing original to offer; ne is the traditionally Reformed ew held by theologians such as vinck and Kuyper. I quote merely e passage from each, and leave it the readers of the *Reformed Journal* judge whether mine or Daane's is e truly Reformed, or a "highly ab act concept" of Divine sovereignty.

Bavinck, *Dogmatiek* II, p. 227: God is the Creator, therefore owner, ssessor, Lord of all; nothing exists possesses anything outside of Him; e alone has absolute authority; His ill determines always and all things . . His will is the final cause of all ings, of their being, but also of eir-being-as-they-are. All is deduced erefrom, creation and sustaining, Rev. 4:11; government, Prov. 21:1; an. 4:35; Ephes. 1:11; suffering of hrist, Luke 22:42; election and rep bation, Rom. 9:15f; regeneration, as. 1:18; sanctification, Phil. 2:13; ffering of believers, I Peter 3:17; ur life circumstances, Jas. 4:15; Acts 8:21; Rom. 15:32; even the smallest nd most insignificant things, Matt. 0:29."

Kuyper, *Gemeene Gratie* III, pp. 8-0: "The starting point of the Re ormed Confession lies in the sover ignty of God, and not in the salvation f man or redemption of the sinner. While it is true that every Confession resupposes a confessor, and that in he confessor, in his self-conscious ess, the starting point is his calling hrough Jesus, yet the Reformed Chris ian distinguishes himself from all thers, in that he does not rest at this oint, but asks himself: 'How did I ome to confess?' and then he cannot nswer otherwise than that God in His majesty irresistibly urges him to his confession. He finds himself in an experience like Jeremiah's, who by the working of God's Spirit found as it were a fire in his bones, and was compelled to cry out: 'O Jehovah, thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed.' God's sovereignty is for the Reformed believer not a mere philosophic theory (that reasons): There must be order in the universe; therefore all that exists must be subject to God; hence, God must be sovereign over all. Not in the least! Our Reformed confession originates in the heart of our soul life as much as Luther's 'justified by faith.' The Reformed Christian knows that he has been a rebel against God; that he himself wanted to be sovereign, but he has come to a surrender, he has been conquered, and now he knows that God, not he, is sovereign, and that this defeat, far from making him unhappy and breaking him, has bestowed a salvation which surpasses every worldly joy. Thus God's sovereignty began not with God's almighty government over stars and angels, sea and islands, animal kingdom and nations, but began with an experience, the conviction of God's sovereignty over his (the Christian's) own self, his own person, his own being, over his past, his present and future. . . . Having come to this point, it cannot be otherwise, but that he feels in his soul, not only what is his own, but the whole world's subjection to God's omnipotence. God is sovereign over his soul, body, family, country, all people and nations, the firmament above, yea, the heaven of heavens, all are subject to the Lord Jehovah. Even stronger, you cannot confess the sovereignty of your God over your own soul without acknowledging this sovereignty over all that exists. . . . God's sovereignty must be even over Satan. There is nothing that falls outside of His sovereignty. It includes and embraces everything."

Is Daane's or my view in the line of Reformed traditional thinking? That he could have given up this rich (not "highly abstract") concept for what he now presents as his view of God's sovereignty seems impossible, except that he himself tells us so. The thing that prompted me to write the first time was that I thought I detected a shift of emphasis in thinking, so that man was becoming the center instead of God. Daane's reply has not altered my thoughts on this matter, in fact, he has rather confirmed my impression. For now according to his reply, even God's sovereignty centers on man, whether to grant grace or not. I wonder after all, if what Daane has attributed to me, namely, that I conceive Divine sovereignty to be "a highly abstract concept" is not also in his thinking the Christian Reformed view, and may I then suggest that his whole editorial is a contest against a straw man? And to making this "highly abstract concept" the central doctrine he has attributed the "ills" of the first century of our existence.

C. R. VEENSTRA

Hospers, Iowa

CHOIR ROBES

Newest colorfast fabrics available.
Write for Catalog A78

E. R. MOORE CO.
268 Norman Ave., Brooklyn 22, N. Y.
932 Dakin St., Chicago 13, Ill.
1641 N. Allesandro St., Los Angeles 26, Calif.
Representative in Grand Rapids, Mich.
DIRK VANDER LENDE
35 Fitzhugh S. E. Phone: GL 6-7574

TELEFUNKEN

HIGH FIDELITY AT ITS BEST

Made in Germany for more than one half century

- Considered by many as the World's Finest, Telefunken comes in Three, Four and Six Speaker Models. Each model contains AM, FM and Short Wave Bands for world-wide reception. Beautiful Cabinetry in fine woods.

- **Consoles priced from $359.95 to $695.00**
  Three Speaker Table Model, $159.95
  Six Speaker Table Model, $279.95

Come in to see and hear them!

HERMAN OOSTERHOUSE

1011 Kalamazoo Avenue, S.E. Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

Telephone CH 5-3166 — Open Monday and Friday Evenings

APR 22 1958

RESPONSE TO REV. VEENSTRA'S LETTER:

I suspect that Rev. Veenstra quite misunderstands me. His quotation from Kuyper would seem to say so. Kuyper urges that a right understanding of God's sovereignty does *not* begin with His power over islands and stars, but from the work of grace wrought in the believer's heart, and *from there* proceeds faith's understanding of God's sovereignty over islands and stars, and nations (!). With this I heartily agree. But this is but to urge that God's sovereignty in Biblical thought is not defined abstractly, that is, as bare power unrelated to grace, but that it is defined in conjunction with His freedom to grant or withhold grace. Such a conception of sovereignty does not represent a tiny segment of the truth about divine sovereignty. On the contrary, since it relates to believers and to islands and stars, as well as to nations, it indicates a divine sovereignty over all things.

The matters raised by Rev. Veenstra call for a more adequate treatment. I hope in future articles to write more extensively on the whole subject. I trust, however, that this brief answer will at least set my position in proper focus.

JAMES DAANE

SIRS:

In the *Journal* of October 1957 I find a book review by James Daane, pages 18ff. In this review I found several errors and I would like to offer some corrections.

These corrections have nothing to do with the review of the book under discussion. The errors appear in the opening sentences of the review and they misrepresent the "Hervormde Kerk," the Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

Although it is true to a certain extent that some form of State control was imposed upon the Hervormde Kerk in 1816, it is not true that this control was ended in the year 1945. That happened already one hundred years earlier when the new Constitution of 1848 loosened the tie between State and Church as much as possible. Way before this date the State had virtually refrained from its right to interfere with Church business.

In 1852 the Hervormde Kerk adopted a new church-order in which the principles of separation between Church and State were carried out. These principles were firmly rooted by 1867.

A completely new Constitution had to be drawn up, as specified by the General Synod of 1945. It was not completed until 1949 when it was adopted with an overwhelming majority. Perhaps it is of interest to note that the extreme right and left wings in the Hervormde Kerk banded together and sought a court-injunction to block the proposed and adopted new Constitution! Their action was lost since the courts of the State held that the Church I full power within its own domains

Another error must be noted wl Daane states how the "Gereformee Kerken" seceded from the "St Church" in 1837. There was no sec sion in 1837, and the Gereformee Kerken did not appear on the sc until another half-century had pass

Daane may be confusing two sec sions from the Hervormde Kerk. T first one occurred in 1834 when Cock and Scholten became the lead of what later became known as "Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk." was not until 1869 that the seced finally agreed to this name and a lot strife and unrest accompanied this gr before things quieted down a bit. T second secession, definitely apart fr the first one was under the (ab leadership of Dr. Kuyper. They cal themselves "Dolerende Kerken" becau they "mourned" over the situation which they found themselves ecclesias cally.

These two secession bodies came some sort of unity in 1892 when t Gereformeerde Kerken came into ing. But it was not a true union cause a large segment of the Chris lijk Gereformeerde Kerk continues exist under the same name ur now. . . .

Perhaps it would be wise to ac too, that not only a specific kind "orthodox" people left the Hervorm Kerk at that time, but also the "liberal were not satisfied and left in lar numbers to form the "Protestante bond" (1870).

One might easily gain the impressi from Daane's remarks that the He vormde Kerk survived as an associ tion of liberals, and that was definite not the case.

May I take this opportunity also express my appreciation for *The R formed Journal.* I enjoy reading it.

Sincerely yours,

G. J. TEN ZIJTHO

Vancouver, B. C., Canada

The Princeton Institute of Theology

July 7 - 17, 1958
PRESENTING:
Nels Ferre Martin Niemoeller
Norman Goodall Allen Wehrli
and many others
Registration: $5.00 per person
$7.50 per couple
Board, room, and tuition
$50.00 per person

For details write Donovan Norquist
PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
Princeton, New Jersey

If You Want the Best and "Best Value"

Baldwin
PIANOS • ORGANS

H. M. VAHEY MUSIC CO.
6 Jefferson Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, Mich.

Your Standard of Excellence since 1912

PULPIT ROBES

To be sure of your best appearance and long-lasting pleasure, insist on our hand-sewn, custom-tailored robes.

ROBES FOR YOUR CHOIR, TOO

Write for catalog F-7

BENTLEY & SIMON INC
7 West 36 St. New York 18, N.Y.

5 FOR 1 COUPON

THE REFORMED JOURNAL
231 JEFFERSON, S. E. GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

Sirs: Please send a Trial Subscription (5 complete issues) to:

NAME: .....

CITY: .....

STATE: .....

I enclose one dollar ($1.00) in full payment of this Trial Subscription.

Signature: .....